



NJDOE News

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For Release: April 30, 2004

Draft DFG Classification Report Released

Commissioner of Education William L. Librera today released the preliminary draft of the New Jersey Department of Education's revised District Factor Group (DFG) classification report, which provides a composite statistical index of the socioeconomic status of New Jersey school districts.

Commissioner Librera said he is making the draft report public in order to solicit comments and suggestions from school district officials and other interested parties prior to the finalization of the document by July 1. A meeting will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, June 7, at the DOE offices in Trenton to provide an opportunity for public comment on the draft.

The draft report is available on the New Jersey DOE web site at the following link:

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/finance/sf/dfgreport4-29.doc>

DFG classifications are based on US Census data and are revised every 10 years. The DOE uses DFG data to analyze the relationship between student achievement and the socioeconomic status of the communities in which they reside.

The six census data indices used in the DFG statistical model include the percentage of each district's population with no high school diploma, the percentage with some college education and the poverty level and unemployment rate of the district, as well as the residents' occupations and income.

The analysis and weighting of these components is used to produce a statistical score for each district, which is then ranked and placed into one of eight groupings - A, B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I and J. Each grouping consists of districts with similar factor scores. I and J districts score highest on the socioeconomic scale.

Commissioner Librera noted that since he discussed the new DFG classifications in testimony before the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee on April 21, the DOE has received numerous inquiries from districts, education organizations and members of the media.

"Even though the report is only in draft form, I felt it was appropriate to make it public in order to quell rumors and misinformation and give people sufficient time to review the document and ask questions," the Commissioner said.

"I also want to re-emphasize the fact that a district's DFG classification alone has virtually nothing to do with how much state aid the district receives, and that a change in a district's DFG should not be viewed as an indication that the district will receive either less money or more money in coming years," he said.

"State aid levels are determined by a number of factors, including a community's property and income wealth, student enrollment, and student characteristics such as special education classifications, low-income rate and LEP (limited English proficiency) status. The only significant influence of the DFG rankings themselves on state aid is the use of the education spending levels in I and J districts to determine the amount of Education Opportunity Aid - formerly known as Parity Aid - which the Abbott districts receive," Commissioner Librera said.